

Legislative Media Relations Unit
915 15th St. NW, 6th Fl.
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 675-2312



Fax: (202) 546-0738
Email: media@dcacclu.org
Web: www.aclu.org

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ACLU Says House Torture Provision Undermines Freedom, Congress Must Learn From Mistakes of Abu Ghraib

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Contact: Shin Inouye
(202) 675-2312

WASHINGTON – Concerned members of Congress met today to voice their opposition to a provision in the Republican House leadership “9/11 Commission Implementation Act” that would allow for the deportation of certain non-citizens to countries where they are likely to be tortured. The American Civil Liberties Union today joined the chorus of those urging members to reject that measure.

The provision would apply to non-U.S. citizens convicted of crimes, those who have participated in persecution or those who the government asserts, but does not need to prove, is a danger to national security. It would also permit the deportation of individuals to *any* country, even if it was not the suspect’s home country or place of birth. This measure was approved by the House Judiciary Committee last week on a party-line vote. The ACLU noted that in a letter to the editor in today’s *Washington Post*, White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales stated that the White House does not support this measure.

At a press conference held this afternoon, the ACLU stood with members of Congress and other organizations in calling for the removal of this provision.

“After Abu Ghraib, this nation rejected torture as a policy,” said Timothy H. Edgar, an ACLU Legislative Counsel. “Now, like so many other things, the House leadership wants to outsource that function to other countries. This measure, if adopted, would violate international standards against torture and ultimately undermine our national security.”

For more on the ACLU’s concerns with Congress’s implementation of the 9/11 Commission’s findings, go to:
<http://www.aclu.org/intelligencereform>